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have secured the positions for men of the same type as those that now rest from their labors. At the same time one of our most able scientists applied for another vacant position. His services were declined without reasonable explanation. One of the deceased curators held also the position of vice-president. The officering of the academy with wealthy gentlemen of leisure not having proven very profitable to the treasury, a scientific man was selected to fill the vacant vice-presidency. We think it unfortunate, however, that the gentleman so honored should be an active opponent of modern scientific thought, on the question of evolution. So much for the new administration of the academy, of which the friends of progress had reason to expect better things.

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RECENT LITERATURE.

NORDENSKIÖLD'S VOYAGE OF THE VEGA.¹—This record of the expedition which had the good fortune to accomplish the North-east passage probably led to the ill-fated *Jeannette* expedition; at any rate the narrative before us will be read by thousands who have followed with so much interest the track of the *Jeannette*, and have traced the wanderings of the unfortunate Lieut. De Long and his party to the place of their sufferings and death near the mouth of the Lena. As a contribution to geographical science, this is a work of the first magnitude, as it not only describes the first successful voyage around Northern Europe and Asia, from Stockholm to Bering straits and thence round the continent to the original point of departure, but the English-reading public have for the first time, in this translation, a clear account of the vast treeless low plains or tundras of Siberia, especially the region beyond the mouth of the Yenisej, and of the two races, the Samoyeds to the west, and the Chukchis to the east, which roam over these barrens. We also have a clear picture of the vegetable and especially the animal life, both terrestrial and marine, of this little known region. There is not a man living better qualified to accomplish this voyage and to report upon the results, than Professor, now Baron Nordenskiöld. In 1868 he went to Spitzbergen, in 1870 to Greenland, where he made valuable observations on the interior ice of that country, which are in part recorded in this volume; in 1872-73 he revisited Spitzbergen, wintering there, and in 1875 and 1876 he made a voyage to the Yenisej river, and thus acquired the knowledge and experience in Arctic travel which he used so successfully in the crowning exploration which has given him a world-wide fame. As a geologist as well as geographer, Nordenskiöld had already acquired a European reputation, and the staff of naturalists (Drs. Kjellman

¹ *The Voyage of the Vega round Asia and Europe.* With a historical review of previous journeys along the north coast of the old world. By A. E. NORDENSKIÖLD. Translated by ALEXANDER LESLIE. With five steel portraits, numerous maps and illustrations. New York, Macmillan & Co. 8vo, pp. 756.

and Stuxberg) he took with him had already made successful explorations in Spitsbergen. Nordenskiöld's style is clear and graphic, the plan of the book is comprehensive and well carried out, though the translator's work has not always been successful, as Swedish idioms appear here and there to mar the fluency of the narrative.

Confining ourselves to the scientific results, the ethnological matter is of special interest. Of the polar races whose acquaintance our author has made, he regards the reindeer Lapps as standing the highest, and next to them come the Eskimo of Danish Greenland; next below them in civilization come the Eskimo of Northwestern America, "on whose originally rough life, contact with the American whale-fishers appears to have had a very beneficial influence." Next come the Chukchis, who have had but limited intercourse with Europeans, but whose honesty and hospitality and general good behavior has been tested, not only by Nordenskiöld, but recently in a very satisfactory way by the Rodgers party. Last of all come the Samoyeds, who inhabit the region from Waygats island eastward to the Gulf of Obi. Their contact with the Russians has had "a distinctly deteriorating effect."

A chapter is devoted to the Samoyeds and another to the Chukchis, among whom the *Vega* party wintered.

More is said of the animal life than usual in such works, and this will prove one of the most attractive features of the book to our readers. To the animal world, especially the birds and mammals of Novaya Zembyla, a special chapter is devoted, while the marine zoölogy of the Kara sea is fully discussed, as dredging was carried on at all possible points.

The New Siberian islands, well known among Russian ivory collectors for their extraordinary richness in tusks and portions of skeletons of the mammoth, were visited. The history of the discovery of the mammoth is set forth by Nordenskiöld, who infers from the fact that at least a hundred pairs of tusks come annually into the market, "that during the years that have elapsed since the conquest of Siberia, useful tusks from more than 20,000 animals have been collected." The first frozen carcass, a "mammoth mummy," was found in the frozen soil on the Yenisej, in 1692, by Ides, a Russian ambassador, on a journey through Siberia to China; while the remains of the mammoth are to be found all over Siberia. Nordenskiöld says that the nearer we come to the coast of the Polar sea, the more common are the remains of the mammoth, especially at places where there have been great landslips at the river banks when the ice breaks up in spring. Nowhere, however, are they found in such numbers as on the New Siberian islands. Here Hedenström, in the space of a verst, saw ten tusks sticking out of the ground, and from a single sandbank on the west side of Liachoff's island,

the ivory collectors had, when this traveler visited the spot, for eighty years made their best tusk harvest." Associated with the remains of the mammoth, well preserved carcasses of two species of hairy rhinoceros have been found. The last one found was an exceedingly well preserved carcass of a hairy species (*Rhinoceros merckii* Jaeger) discovered on a tributary of the Lena, in 1877. "From the find Schrenck draws the conclusion that this rhinoceros belonged to a high-northern species, adapted to a cold climate, and living in, or at least occasionally wandering to, the regions where the carcass was found. There the mean temperature of the year is now very low, the winter exceedingly cold (-63° '2 has been registered) and the short summer exceedingly warm. Nowhere on earth does the temperature show extremes so widely separated as here. Although the trees in winter often split with tremendous noise, and the ground is rent with the cold, the wood is luxuriant and extends to the neighborhood of the Polar sea, where, besides, the winter is much milder than farther in the interior. With respect to the possibility of these large animals finding sufficient pasture in the regions in question, it ought not to be overlooked that in sheltered places overflowed by the spring inundation there are found, still far north of the limit of trees, luxuriant bushy thickets, whose newly expanded juicy leaves, burned up by no tropical sun, perhaps form a special luxury for grass-eating animals." The account of the discovery, by the *Vega* expedition, of several skeletons of Steller's manatee on Bering island, has already been noticed in this journal.

We have read this volume with the greatest interest. It is a model book of travel and research.

HUXLEY'S THE CRAYFISH.¹—This is one of Professor Huxley's most effective works. The crayfish has received repeated attention from naturalists; some of the best memoirs by the most eminent naturalists have been devoted to the natural history, the embryology and anatomy as well as histology of the crayfish, but so far from being a compilation from these authorities, the work before us is a fresh, original study of a well known and most accessible animal, and the subject, as may be expected, is treated in the methods of to-day; not only from a special point of view, but from the modern broad standpoint of the relations of the crayfish to the world about it and to the fossil forms allied to it. Should we want to give one some idea of modern zoölogy in its widest sense, the methods of study and the ultimate questions arising out of any special zoölogical work, we should put this little monograph in the student's hands.

¹ *The International Scientific Series. The Crayfish.* An introduction to the study of Zoology. By T. H. HUXLEY, F.R.S. With eighty-two illustrations. New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1880. 12mo, pp. 371. \$1.75.